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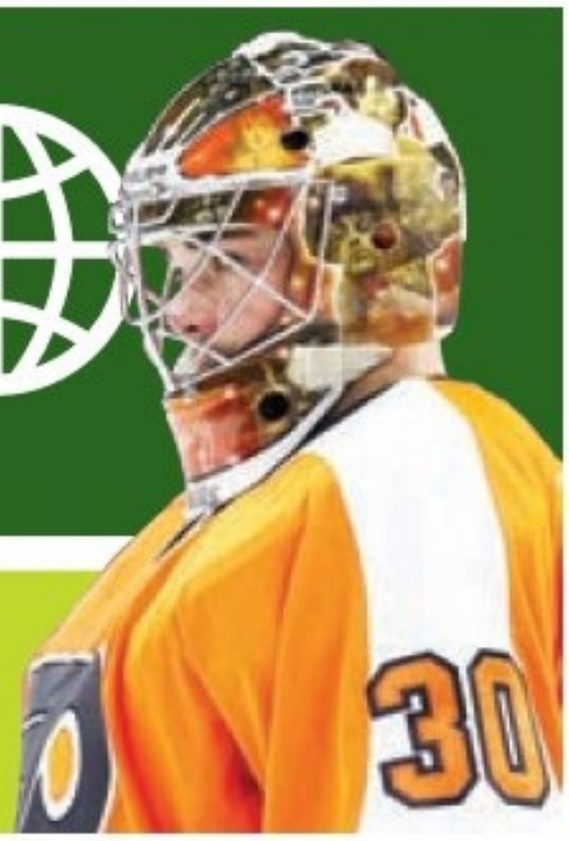


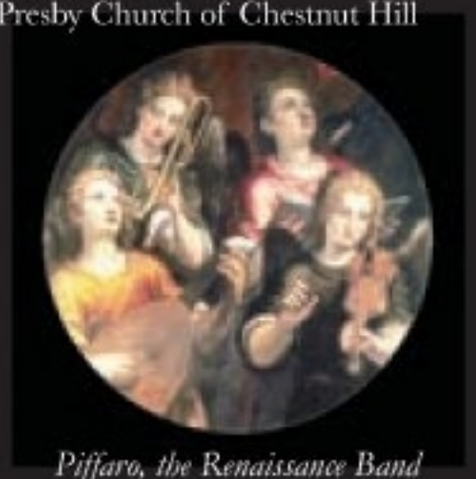
WHO IS FLYERS REAL NO. 1?

Two very solid goaltenders are vying for playing time. 33

State senator pleads guilty, resigns. 4-5

Prep for 'Star Wars' with these classic films. 20

Christmas in Renaissance Germany
Fri 12/18 @ 8PM
Cathedral Basilica Ss Peter & Paul
Sat 12/19 @ 8PM
Presby Church of Chestnut Hill



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MAKE YOUR PRESENTS FELT

Go offline! Check out these local spots where you can do all your holiday shopping in person. 22

ALL IMAGES PROVIDED

ISLAMIC STATE FIGHT

1 U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter and Iraqi leaders on Wednesday discussed the idea of greater U.S. contributions to the fight against Islamic State, including an offer of attack helicopters to help retake territory from the insurgent group. Carter said Washington is willing to do more to support Iraqi security forces as they battle Islamic State. REUTERS

SAN BERNARDINO VISIT

2 President Barack Obama will travel on Friday to San Bernardino, California, the site of the Dec. 2 shooting by a radicalized Muslim couple that claimed 14 lives, the White House said on Wednesday. White House spokesman Josh Earnest said Obama will meet with families of the victims while in San Bernardino. The FBI believes U.S.-born Syed Rizwan Farook, 28, and his Pakistani-born wife Tashfeen Malik, 29, had been radicalized for some time before opening fire on Farook's co-workers. REUTERS

WILMORE TO HOST EVENT

3 The White House Correspondents' Association said Comedy Central late-night host Larry Wilmore would headline its annual April dinner, known for its playful ribbing of politicians and the news media. The host of "The Nightly Show with Larry Wilmore" will be the main performer, the association said. REUTERS

7 TAXI PROTEST

On Wednesday, hundreds of taxi drivers snarled traffic in Center City by encircling City Hall to protest the unlicensed ride-sharing services UberX and Lyft.

MAIN PHOTO BY CHARLES MOSTOLLER, ALL OTHER PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

GOOGLE DRIVERLESS CARS

4 Google plans to make its self-driving cars unit, which will offer rides for hire, a stand-alone business under its parent company, Alphabet Inc., next year, Bloomberg reported. The service could be launched in San Francisco and Austin, Texas, locations, where it has tested the cars extensively, Bloomberg said, citing a person briefed on the strategy. REUTERS

PHILLY CAR REGISTRATION

5 If Philadelphia City Council has its way, car owners in the city are going to pay more to register their vehicles each year. An effort led by Councilwoman Cindy Bass and Councilman Mark Squilla, the bill raises the vehicle registration fee in Philadelphia by $5. The additional revenue will go toward road improvements, in part to boost the effort known as Vision Zero. City Council passed the bill, which now awaits Mayor Nutter's signature, who's expected the sign the bill. JOSH KRUGER

CHICAGO POLICE REVIEW

6 U.S. Department of Justice officials began meeting with Chicago police on Wednesday, three weeks after the release of a video showing a white officer shooting a black teen 16 times, which spurred calls for Mayor Rahm Emanuel to resign. The meeting is to review policies and procedures, a police spokesman said. REUTERS

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Clockwise from top left, District Attorney Seth Williams, Attorney General Kathleen Kane, Louise Bishop, and Thomasine Tynes. CHARLES MOSTOLLER/PROVIDED

Philly pol pleads guilty in corruption investigation

State Sen. Louise Bishop pleaded guilty Wednesday to charges of wrongly accepting gifts.

JENNY DEHUFF and SAM NEWHOUSE
letters@metro.us

A state legislator has resigned amidst charges she took money from an undercover operative as part of a sting operation led by the attorney general's office, Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams announced Wednesday.

Williams accepted State Rep. Louise Bishop's guilty plea to one count of a fraudulent statement of financial interest, considered a misdemeanor. She'll be placed on six months probation, resign from office immediately and pay a $1,500 fine in restitution and pay $5,000 in prosecution costs.

The undercover sting was first brought to light by the Philadelphia Inquirer last year. It revealed Attorney General Kathleen Kane shut down a sting operation initiated by her predecessor, Tom Corbett, which dug into politicians accepting unreported gifts. Kane claimed the probe was racially motivated and un-prosecutable. All politicians implicated are black.

The investigation spurred criticism from several local and state lawmakers, including state Rep. Mark Cohen, who lashed out at Williams for resurrecting the Corbett-spawned probe.

In a letter dated Dec. 4 and addressed to Williams, Cohen scratched out Williams' typed, formal name and scrawled, "Seth."

Citing an article in the Daily News, Cohen impassionedly wrote, "[analysis in the story] deeply offends my conscience" and "raises serious and fundamental questions as to whether the setting up to commit crimes of my colleagues Louise Williams Bishop … was fair, just and impartial."

Cohen claimed — and still does — that "key officials" deliberately manufactured the crimes and targeted black electeds, particularly females, out of racial hatred, racial ste-

reotyping, contempt for women in the workplace and contempt for the political process as a whole.

Reached by phone Wednesday, Cohen told Metro, "I am glad that, at age 82, [Bishop] faces no prison sentence. I remain queasy about the government manufacturing the situation enabling and encouraging the commission of crimes, the publicly available memo targeting the members of the black caucus for investigation and expressing contempt for elected officials and working women."

But Williams said Bishop's choice to drop a motion exploring selective prosecution proved that it was not a racially motivated investigation.

6

BISHOP HAS BEEN PLACED ON SIX MONTH'S PROBATION, PLUS FINES AND FEES.

"The withdrawal of the defense's motion of selective prosecution based on race clearly shows that the investigation and prosecution of these elected officials was never based on race," Williams said in a statement.

"The plea and subsequent conviction of Ms. Bishop shows that I have done what my office has been charged by the citizens of Philadelphia to do: fight corruption and make this city safe."

Williams called this investigation a particularly difficult one, since he has personally known Bishop since he was 4 years old.

Thomasine Tynes, the Tiffany & Co. bracelet-accepting former Philadelphia Traffic Court judge who pleaded guilty to corruption last summer, is one of four elected officials who have entered pleas stemming from the undercover operation.

State Rep. Vanessa Lowery Brown is the only local politician of six indicted for illegally receiving gifts who has not yet pleaded guilty or been convicted. Brown returns to court Jan. 11.

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Dad sues Penn State over son's suicide

Marquise Braham PROVIDED

A Penn State student's father says his son's suicide was sparked by a hazing ritual.

A prominent television news producer who believes his son's suicide was the result of college fraternity hazing filed a wrongful death lawsuit in Philadelphia on Tuesday against Penn State University, the fraternity and four students.

Marquise Braham was 19 and a student at the university's Altoona campus when he leapt from the roof of a New York area parking garage last year, soon after resident advisers at the college told supervisors the youth appeared to be suffering a breakdown as a result of hazing by Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity, according to the complaint.

"In my family's opinion, both Penn State and Phi Sigma Kappa severely damaged our son, both physically and mentally, with hazing activities, and even worse, sought to allegedly cover it up by destroying evidence," Braham's father, Rich, a managing editor at ABC News, said in a statement.

Braham was not only traumatized by the hazing — which the lawsuit said included having to make a choice between snorting cocaine or being sodomized on video — but also suffered emotional distress when he was expected to in turn haze a group of new pledges to the fraternity, his father said.

The lawsuit said that Braham went to Catholic confession hours before his death, telling a family member he was going to "confess his fraternity sins."

Of the four students named as defendants, Karly Bish and Maria Mosely were resident advisers at the university, and Eric Traister and Andrew O'Connor are former officers of the fraternity.

In the lawsuit, Braham alleges Bish initially urged Marquise to participate in the hazing despite its brutal nature.

Bish and Mosely then later informed their supervisor at Penn State that Marquise appeared to be suffering a mental breakdown because of the experience, the complaint said.

The hazing included forcing pledges to collectively drink two kegs of beer and then fill two wastebaskets with vomit, choose between snorting a line of cocaine or being sodomized on video, fight each other and to kill, gut and skin squirrels, according to the complaint.

Penn State University spokeswoman Lisa Powers said the university, which suspended the fraternity after Marquise's death, does not comment on pending litigation.

The lawsuit comes at a time of increased national awareness of fraternity hazing. Thirty-seven members of a fraternity at Baruch College in Manhattan are preparing to go on trial in Pennsylvania in connection with the death of a pledge during a hazing ritual. REUTERS

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Spare time to goof off

Pam Babin, left, and Tess Moore ham it up at Penn's Landing near the RiverRink on Wednesday afternoon. CHARLES MOSTOLLER

Jarrod Tutko Sr. and Kimberly Tutko. PROVIDED

Parents get decades for son's death

The parents who starved their disabled 9-year-old son to death were sentenced Wednesday.

The parents who starved to death their 9-year-old disabled son and nearly did the same to a disabled daughter got decades in a Pennsylvania prison at their sentencing on Wednesday for murder.

Jarrod Tutko Sr., 39, and his wife, Kimberly Tutko, 40, both of Harrisburg, pleaded guilty in October to third-degree murder and related offenses in the death of Jarrod Tutko Jr., and the near-death of his sister Arianna.

Jarrod Tutko got 21 to 42 years in state prison. Kimberly Tutko got 20 to 40 years.

"I am not a monster ... I love my children," Jarrod Tutko said before sentence was handed down, reports said.

After they pleaded guilty, prosecutor Sean McCormack said he would seek consecutive sentences amounting to 26 to 52 years for the father, and 23½ to 47 years for the mother because of the gravity of their crimes.

"We anticipate and hope that the sentences will be tantamount to life in prison," McCormack said in Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas in Harrisburg ahead of the sentencing, saying that neither parent showed remorse.

The couple lived with their six children, all but one suffering from a medical or developmental disorder. Kimberly Tutko has four other children, fathered by a different man, and they were all taken away from her by court order.

On Aug. 1, 2014, Harrisburg police went to the Tutko residence and found the decomposing body of Jarrod Jr., who had died about four days earlier. He suffered from Fragile-X Syndrome, a genetic disorder, and was 3½ feet tall and weighed less than 17 pounds because of starvation, an autopsy found.

His parents kept him locked in a third-floor room with no bed or lights, where he smeared himself and the walls with his feces, authorities said.

The daughter, Arianna, 10, was found in a second-floor bedroom in a coma, hours from death, police said. She recovered, and all five children were taken from the parents by state authorities. REUTERS

BRIEF

With no budget, Philly schools could close in a month

As state legislators continue to wrangle over the months-late state budget, Philadelphia schools to official said without more funding, the city's schools may need to shut down in January.

Superintendent Dr. William Hite sent school staff a letter Wednesday saying that by Jan. 29, with no state budget, the school would no longer be able to pay for operating costs, the Inquirer reported.

Past Jan. 29, "our ability to keep schools open, issue paychecks and pay bills is uncertain," Hite wrote.

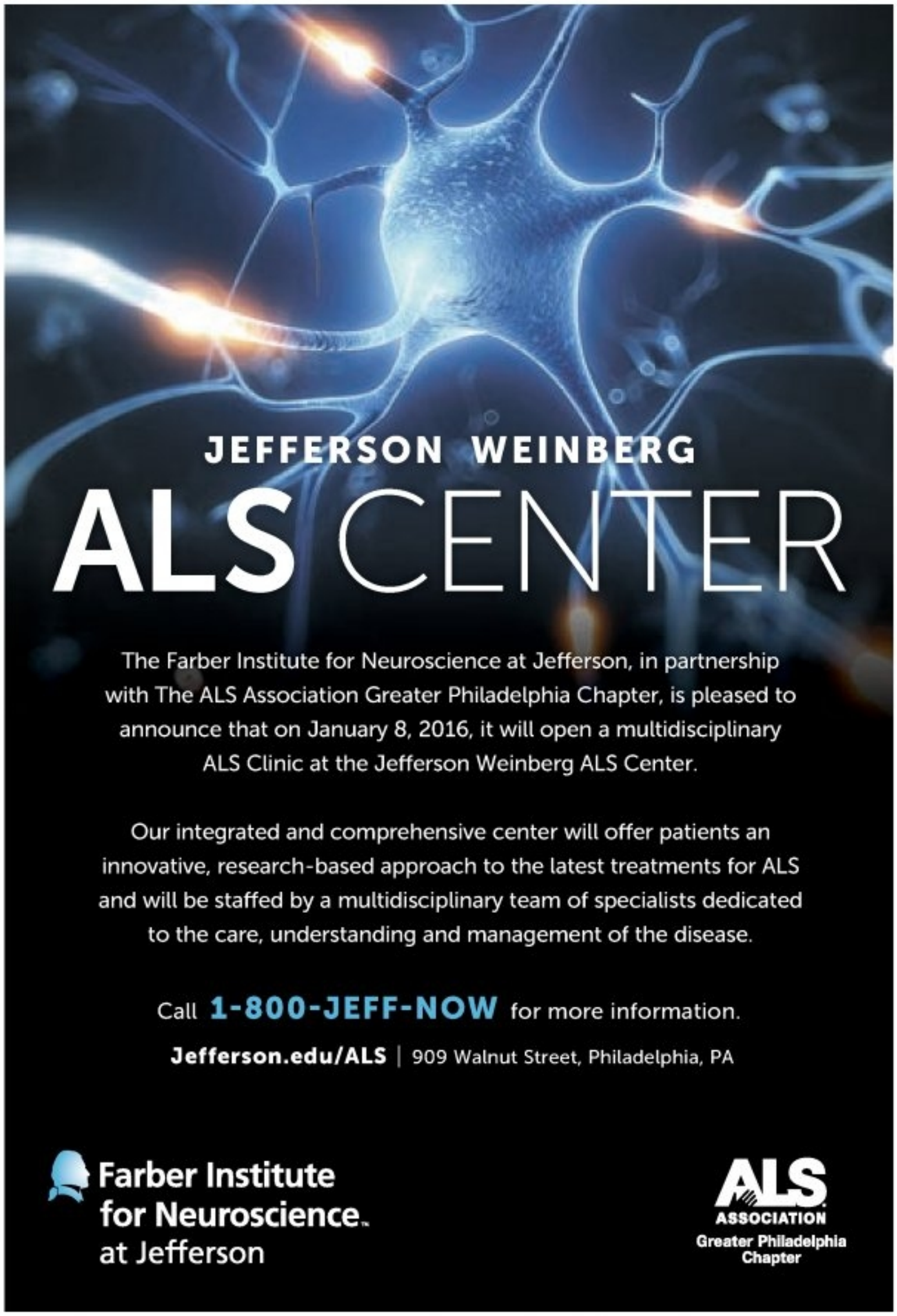
Philadelphia Federation of Teachers President Jerry Jordan released a statement on Wednesday responding to the news, calling the budget showdown "a full-scale emergency."

"Our school district, like many others, finds itself on the brink of a shutdown because legislators have put partisan ideology ahead of educating its citizens," Jordan wrote. "This is a dereliction of duty that has jeopardized the futures of our schoolchildren."

Gov. Tom Wolf campaigned to office on the promise of increased funding for public schools, in part through a proposed 5 percent extraction tax on fracking in the state.

The fracking tax appears to no longer be in the cards, however, and the proposed versions of the state budget have included a proposed increase in sales tax to make up the funding.

Reports said the legislature could be voting this week on a new version of the budget deal. METRO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Please donate to the Metro Magic annual holiday toy drive during the 2015 holiday season

In keeping with the holiday spirit of giving, Metro is once again launching Tony's Metro Magic, our annual toy drive for underprivileged children in Boston, New York and Philadelphia.

This year marks the seventh anniversary of the toy drive, which was renamed in memory of the man who oversaw the project for more than four years, Tony Metcalf, Metro's longest-running editor-in-chief. Metcalf passed away in 2013 from colon cancer at the age of 50.

Metcalf lit up every year as he saw the faces of children unwrap their holiday gifts. It is our goal to keep that magic alive. We are now asking readers to contribute what they can to Tony's Metro Magic.

Metro has created a wish list at the Target website that readers can access by going to www.metro.us and clicking on the Tony's Metro Magic logo.

From there, just choose the toys you wish to donate, pay online using Target's secure payment system. Your gifts, along with your name attached, will be delivered to Metro's offices in each city.

This season we hope you will remember the children who will spend the holidays in shelters or who may not have gifts to open. Even one small gift can make a big difference in a child's holiday season. METRO

Obama administration authorizes $1.83B arms sale to Taiwan

Past U.S. weapons sales to Taiwan have attracted strong condemnation in China, which considers Taiwan a renegade province.

The U.S. administration formally notified Congress on Wednesday of a $1.83 billion arms sale package for Taiwan, including two frigates, anti-tank missiles, amphibious assault vehicles and other equipment, despite opposition from China.

The authorization came a year after Congress passed legislation approving the sale. It is the first such major arms sale to Taiwan in more than four years.

A spokesman for the White House's National Security Council said the authorization followed previous sales notifications by the administration totaling over $12 billion under the Taiwan Relations Act.

"Our longstanding policy on arms sales to Taiwan has been consistent across six different U.S. administrations," the spokesman, Myles Caggins, said, while adding: "We remain committed to our one-China policy."

Although Washington does not recognize Taiwan as a separate state from China, it is committed under the Taiwan Relations Act to ensuring Taipei can maintain a credible defense.

The new sales come at a period of heightened tensions between the United States and China over the South China Sea, where Washington has been critical of China's building of manmade islands to assert expansive territorial claims.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said this week that Beijing opposed U.S. arms sales to Taiwan as "an interference in China's internal affairs."

Hong said such sales "damaged the peaceful development of ties across the Taiwan Strait and Sino-U.S. ties and said Beijing urged Washington "to earnestly recognize the high sensitivity and serious harm of weapons sales to Taiwan."

David McKeeby, a spokesman for the U.S. State Department, said the package was aimed at "supporting Taiwan's efforts to develop more innovative and asymmetric defensive capabilities."

He said it included two Perry-class guided-missile frigates; $57 million of Javelin anti-tank missiles made by Raytheon and Lockheed Martin; $268 million of TOW 2B anti-tank missiles and $217 million of Stinger surface-to-air missiles made by Raytheon, and $375 million of AAV-7 Amphibious Assault Vehicles. REUTERS

AAV-7 Amphibious Assault Vehicle GETTY IMAGES

Federal Reserve Bank Chair Janet Yellen GETTY IMAGES

Fed raises rates citing ongoing US recovery

The Federal Reserve hiked interest rates for the first time in nearly a decade on Wednesday, signaling faith that the U.S. economy had largely overcome the wounds of the 2007-2009 financial crisis.

The U.S. central bank's policy-setting committee raised the range of its benchmark interest rate by a quarter of a percentage point to between 0.25 percent and 0.50 percent, ending a lengthy debate about whether the economy was strong enough to withstand higher borrowing costs.

"With the economy performing well and expected to continue to do so, the committee judges that a modest increase in the federal funds rate is appropriate," Fed Chair Janet Yellen said in a press conference after the rate decision was announced. "The economic recovery has clearly come a long way."

The Fed's policy statement noted the "considerable improvement" in the U.S. labor market, where the unemployment rate has fallen to 5 percent, and said policymakers are "reasonably confident" inflation will rise over the medium term to the Fed's 2 percent objective.

The central bank made clear the rate hike was a tentative beginning to a "gradual" tightening cycle, and that in deciding its next move it would put a premium on monitoring inflation, which remains mired below target.

"The process is likely to proceed gradually," Yellen said, a hint that further hikes will be slow in coming. REUTERS

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Baltimore on edge after hung jury in policeman's manslaughter trial

Baltimore City Circuit Court Judge Barry Williams said an administrative judge would schedule a new trial as early as Thursday.

A mistrial was declared on Wednesday in the case of a Baltimore police officer charged in the death of Freddie Gray, a black man whose killing while in custody sparked riots in April, and the city's mayor urged calm.

The judge dismissed the jury in the involuntary manslaughter trial of Officer William Porter — the first of six officers to be tried in Gray's death - after 16 hours of deliberations during which the jurors were unable to reach a verdict on any of the charges against the policeman.

Gray's death triggered rioting in the majority-black city of 620,000 people, and intensified a U.S. debate on police treatment of minorities.

On Wednesday, scores of protesters marched through downtown Baltimore following the ruling, chanting "we have nothing to lose but our chains" and "the whole damn system is guilty as Hell." Uniformed police officers took up positions throughout the city, including by the courthouse and police headquarters, and at least two demonstrators were arrested.

Gray's family and officials, including Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, called for calm, eager to avoid a replay of the unrest that followed Gray's death.

"We ask the public to remain calm and patient," said Gray's stepfather, Richard Shipley. "We are confident there will be another trial with a different jury. We are calm; you should be calm too."

Rawlings-Blake, who is black, said, "Our reaction needs to be one of respect for our neighborhoods. In the case of any disturbance in the city we are prepared to respond."

A protester yells at members of the Baltimore City Sheriff's Department in front of the Baltimore City Circuit Courthouse East, after a mistrial was declared in the trial of William Porter on Wednesday in Baltimore, Maryland. GETTY IMAGES

Porter, 26, was charged in Gray's death from a broken neck suffered while the 25-year-old man was transported in the back of a police van.

The jury of five men and seven women had said on Tuesday that it was deadlocked, but Williams had told them to keep trying to reach a verdict.

Porter, who, like Gray, is black, was charged for having put Gray in the back of the van without seat-belting him and with being too slow to pass on his request for medical assistance.

The officer's attorneys had argued that Porter may have been unaware of department policy mandating that detainees be seat-belted, which was put into place shortly before Gray's arrest. REUTERS

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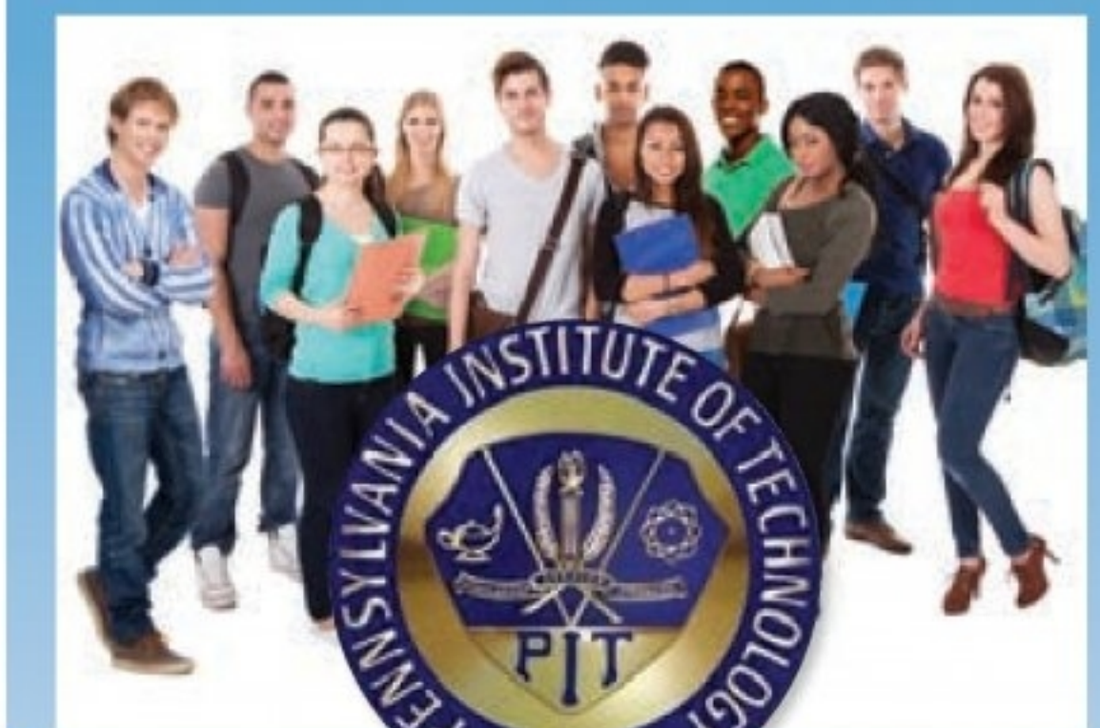

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Teens smoked, drank, used drugs less in 2015: Study

The study, funded by grants from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, one of the National Institutes of Health, surveyed 44,892 students in 382 secondary schools. GETTY IMAGES

A decades-long decline in teenage drinking and smoking continued in 2015 and use of some drugs by eighth-graders and high school students also fell, while marijuana consumption extended a five-year flat trend, according to results of a study released on Wednesday.

Teen cigarette smoking fell to its lowest level since the University of Michigan began doing its national survey on licit and illicit substances in 1975, according to a news release on the study, part of a series called Monitoring the Future.

Only 7 percent of students in grades eight, 10 and 12 who were polled reported smoking cigarettes in the previous month, down from 8 percent a year earlier and the lowest level in 41 years of annual tracking.

"Such a reduction can translate eventually into preventing hundreds of thousands of premature deaths as well as many serious diseases," Lloyd Johnston, principal investigator of the study, said in a news release.

The study said increased taxes, advertising restrictions, smoking bans in many public places and quit-smoking campaigns are all paying off.

Forty percent of the students polled said they had used alcohol in the past year and 22 percent said they had done so in the previous 30 days — also the lowest levels since the study began in the mid-1970s. The one-year decline was not statistically significant, the report said, but the long-term decline is highly significant.

Students also reported declining use of heroin, synthetic marijuana, amphetamines and MDMA, which is known as Ecstasy or Molly.

There was no change in consumption of marijuana, the most used illicit drug.

The survey said 12 percent of eighth-graders, 25 percent of 10th-graders and 35 percent of 12th-graders reported using marijuana at least once in the prior 12 months.

"After rising for several years, the annual prevalence of marijuana has more or less leveled out since about 2010."

The report

As far as more habitual use of marijuana, "one in every 16 or 17 high school seniors is smoking marijuana daily or near daily," the study said. "These rates have changed rather little since 2010 but are for three to six times higher than they were at their low point in 1991." REUTERS

BRIEF

Apple's stock dips as concerns mount about iPhone shipments

Shares of Apple dipped on Wednesday on growing expectations that the consumer technology company may sell fewer iPhones next year than previously thought.

In a note to clients, Bank of America cut its estimate for fiscal 2016 iPhone shipments by 10 million to 220 million, pointing to a weakening among Apple's suppliers.

In another note, Raymond James lowered its estimate for 2016 iPhone shipments to 224 million from 229 million, also pointing to lackluster expectations at Apple suppliers. And on Tuesday, Baird Equity Research trimmed its 2016 iPhone forecast to 234.7 million from 243.8 million, implying 1.5 percent growth over 2015.

Reflecting growing doubts about future iPhone sales, shares of Apple have fallen 4.4 percent over the past month and are down about 18 percent from record highs in April.

In the latest hints of weakness among Apple suppliers, Imagination Technologies on Tuesday said softness in the overall semiconductor industry and smartphone market meant its operating profit would be lower than expected for the rest of its fiscal year.

That mirrored weakness at German peer Dialog Semi, which also cut its outlook, citing softer-than-expected demand for chips used in mobile phones. REUTERS

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No evidence attackers were part of terrorist cell, says FBI head

There is no evidence a married couple who killed 14 people in California this month were part of a terrorist cell, the head of the FBI said, confirming that investigators believe the pair were inspired but not directed by Islamic State.

The Islamist militant group has "revolutionized" terrorism by seeking to inspire such small-scale attacks, FBI Director James Comey said, noting the group uses social media, encrypted communications and slickly produced propaganda to recruit followers around the world.

"Your parents' al Qaeda was a very different model than the threat we face today," Comey told a counterterrorism conference in New York.

However, he said that while the perpetrators of the Dec. 2 shootings in San Bernardino, California — Syed Rizwan Farook, 28, and Tashfeen Malik, 29 — had expressed support for "jihad and martyrdom" in private communications as early as 2013, they never did so publicly on social media.

He also said authorities believe Mohammed Abdulazeez, the suspect in July's fatal shooting of four U.S. Marines and a Navy sailor in Chattanooga, Tennessee, was radicalized by militant propaganda.

"To my mind, there's no doubt that the Chattanooga killer was inspired and motivated by foreign terrorist organization propaganda," he said, but did not specify any particular group.

Tashfeen Malik and Syed Farook are pictured passing through Chicago's O'Hare International Airport in July 27, 2014. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION HANDOUT

Comey said the Federal Bureau of Investigation currently has "hundreds" of investigations in all 50 U.S. states involving potential Islamic State-inspired plots.

Islamic State controls wide swaths of Iraq and Syria, where it seeks to carve out a caliphate. It claimed responsibility for attacks in Paris on Nov. 13 that killed 130 people.

The group has a three-pronged strategy, Comey said: recruit fighters to join it in the Middle East, inspire individuals in other countries to carry out attacks and send out trained operatives to commit violence in Europe and the U.S. REUTERS

"Twitter works as a way to sell books, as a way to promote movies and it works as a way to crowdsource terrorism — to sell murder."

Comey

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Trouble in Gwen and Blake land

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

I'm sure it's just a total, complete coincidence that just after the latest season of "The Voice" ends we get our first report of trouble in the romance between co-coaches Gwen Stefani and Blake Shelton. Not suspicious at all, this. So the duo, both recently divorced and involved in a "romance" that's been played up for the cameras during the last few weeks of episodes, are said to be hitting a rough patch after a backstage incident in which Shelton left his phone behind in the makeup room and Stefani witnessed a text message come in from his ex-wife, Miranda Lambert, according to In Touch. "Gwen saw it and lost it. She found Blake and asked to speak to him privately, but he said he couldn't right then and there. She had tears running down her face and went and locked herself in her dressing room," a source says. "Gwen has seen texts between Blake and Miranda. She's really a mess over this." Is she, though? Or is this all part of the predetermined plan? God, when did I become so cynical?

the word

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The Weeknd in hot water with Bella Hadid

When will people learn that parties are not the best places to misbehave? You know, because other people can see you? Singer The Weeknd apparently didn't realize this when he decided to face-time a pair of eager young fans at a private party celebrating the release of his new album — a party from which 19-year-old model girlfriend, as in she's a model and his girlfriend, not a "model girlfriend" — Bella Hadid was conspicuously absent. "He went to an after-party at a private house in L.A.," a source tells Life & Style, where he hit it off with a blonde and a brunette. "He was making out with both of them, going back and forth. Then they disappeared into a bedroom together." But it's totally cool, I'm sure he just wanted to explain to them in private how much he loves his girlfriend. Now, maybe I'm a little out of touch, but what's a Weeknd?

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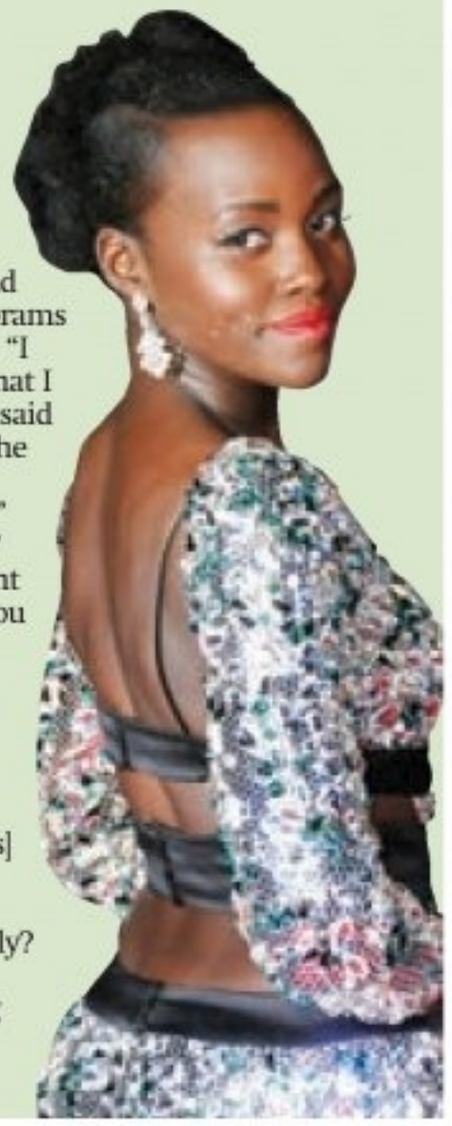
Lupita Nyong'o's clueless 'Star Wars' audition



Hollywood can keep you busy, especially after you've won an Academy Award for your film debut. That might explain why Lupita Nyong'o didn't quite connect the dots when she had a meeting with J.J. Abrams a couple of years ago. "I didn't really know what I was auditioning for," said Nyong'o, who plays the alien Maz Kanata in "The Force Awakens," the latest "Star Wars" film. "I guess I thought I should find work, you know? I was so busy, I was working with adrenaline, so I went in and out. I barely remember that audition, and then two months later [Abrams] called me." So what did this mystery audition entail, exactly? "I remember crouching around and using my hands as a gun." Sounds … fun?

@KChenoweth
I'm tired.

@MarkDuplass
Sometimes I look in the mirror and think to myself... f— yeah.

@TheEllenShow
All I want for Christmas is a baby in a Santa hat. In a basket.

@DanaDelany
I think I could have cured Alzheimers, in the amount of time I've spent doing crossword puzzles to prevent it.

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Maya Rudolph doesn't do FOMO

The "Sisters" star on how staying off social media leads to a happier life.

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Maya Rudolph (with co-star John Leguizamo) does not like what she sees in "Sisters." K.C. BAILEY/UNIVERSAL PICTURES

When "SNL" vet Maya Rudolph isn't busy being hilarious — like in the new comedy "Sisters" alongside Tina Fey and Amy Poehler — she's busy raising her four young children with her husband, filmmaker Paul Thomas Anderson. So it's understandable why she doesn't

Rudolph GETTY IMAGES

have much time for social media. But even she did, she'd avoid it all the same.

Your character, Brinda, has a major chip on her shoulder from high school. How was it playing that kind of long-held resentment?

It is fun. I think the insecurity of Brinda's character really is our own collective insecurity. Everybody wants to be invited to the party. That's sort of the worst possible feeling in terms of high school days. You don't want to be the person that's left off the list. I feel like with Brinda it's almost as if she was just waiting for Kate (played by Fey) to come back to her hometown so she could be like, "See? I've really got my life together." She's probably played it out in her head enough that she's practiced her head whip away. It's very dramatic, as an exit. She's thought about it a long time.

It's interesting how that FOMO turned her into a mean girl.

She has major FOMO. I just learned about FOMO. But everyone's got FOMO. Well, not everyone. Some people don't. Some people are actually content.

Twitter and Facebook have made it more pronounced.

Yes. I don't dabble in those things. Maybe I was just born so early in the '70s that it's just so hard for me to relate to the idea of sharing everything. I feel like if I was constantly doing that and not doing the other things I need to do, I would hate myself a little bit. I don't have enough time to do the things I'm supposed to be doing, so it would just feel like pure procrastination.

Has anyone ever pressured you to do it for work?

Yes. When I did my variety show, I was given a Twitter account. "You've got to announce it." "OK, I'll do it." And so I announced it, like, "Hey! My show's coming on. You should watch it." And the response was so crazy. I obviously had not set up my settings correctly, but people started responding and my phone would not stop. And I couldn't turn it off. It felt weird.

That sounds terrifying.

It was. And I'm not used to it. I'm not good at it. I'm good at other things.

Such as?

Roller skating. But not ice skating. And I do not know how to Rollerblade, either.

What's that smell?

The party in this movie looked crazy, but it could not have smelled very nice.

The only thing that was kind of gnarly was outside. It had a horrible smell from all the water in the sinkhole. It was a bummer. It kind of smelled like the inside of an old, wet cast. But inside the set it smelled wonderful. It wasn't like when you go to a bar at 10 a.m. and you smell last night and you're like, "I'm going to be sick. How did anybody spend time in here last night?"

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4 Shows to see

From the charmingly earnest "Rudolph" to the risqué "DTF," here are four performances to check out.

SYDNEY DUPRIEST
@MetroPhilly
letters@metro.us

Missed "Book of Mormon" the first time around? Don't worry, it's back in Philly until Dec. 27. JOAN MARCUS

"Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer"

Today through Dec. 20
Merriam Theater, 250 S. Broad St.
From $35, Kimmelcenter.org

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the beloved Claymation classic, this stage musical stays true to the bulbous yet dainty proportions and technicolors of the midcentury original.

"The Book of Mormon"

Through Dec. 27
Forrest Theatre, 1114 Walnut St.
From $67, Telecharge.com

The highly lauded musical from the "South Park" creators is back for the holidays. The show has won a cascade of awards, including a Grammy and multiple Tonys. This sarcastic take on the earnestness of religion is somehow still celebratory of the culture it skewers, making it fun for Christmas devotees and grinches alike.

"DTF: Darryl and Timaree Fun Hour"

Friday, 8:30 p.m.
Franky Bradley's,
1320 Chancellor St.
$10, Frankybradleys.com

Comedian Darryl Charles and sexpert Dr. Timaree present a sex ed/comedy/game show at Franky Bradley's, which earlier this year reopened after a nearly 30-year hiatus. The spot retains the original's all-welcoming vibe of quirk and bawdiness, hosting DJs, parties and burlesque performers.

Clint Coley

Sunday, 8 p.m.
TLA, 334 South St.
$15, Lnphilly.com

Originally from Philly, comedian Clint Coley has made a huge name for himself, winning accolades like first place at the Apollo's amateur night, a headlining spot in a Netflix special and the title "Prince of Comedy," bestowed by "King of Comedy" himself, D. L. Hughley.

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5 Films streaming now that inspired 'Star Wars'

George Lucas borrowed from cinema and literature history to create the original run of his magnum opus. If you're jonesing for more "Star Wars" before you see "The Force Awakens," you can subsist on these. MATT PRIGGE

"THE HIDDEN FORTRESS" (1957)

Like "Star Wars," Akira Kurosawa's "The Hidden Fortress" features a feisty princess and two of her lowly followers. CRITERION COLLECTION

At this point, Akira Kurosawa's samurai opus is better known as the film Lucas most extensively ripped off for the movie we'd rather not refer to as "A New Hope." It's not exactly the same story, but it does feature the following: a pair of bickering peasants, a surly hero, a feisty princess, a mysterious baddie (who might not be as bad as he lets on) and, of course, a not-so-impregnable fortress. It's also, for Kurosawa, a relatively light affair. The director's samurai films are often as serious as they are dynamic — or, in the case of "Yojimbo," hilariously cynical. But "The Hidden Fortress" is pretty much a straight-up adventure, beautifully told and filmed, and only profound in its final moments. "I had fun," the princess rhapsodizes in retrospect, even as all seems doomed. "I got to see the good and bad in people."
See on: Hulu Plus

"FLASH GORDON" SERIALS (1936-1940)

George Lucas swiped the opening text crawls of his "Star Wars" films from the old "Flash Gordon" serials. PROVIDED

Lucas drew a lot of his visuals — and the gee-whiz cliffhanger nature of the "Star Wars" plot — from the 1930s "Flash Gordon" serials, which starred swimmer-turned-actor Buster Crabbe as Alex Raymond's comic-strip hero: a polo player who finds himself amid adventures in space. The rising title cards that open each "Star Wars" entry were lifted straight from them. You could say the same for Luke Skywalker himself, who, like Flash, is a blond everyguy plucked from his home to battle a scary supervillain. It only took three years after "Star Wars" for a "Flash Gordon" movie to join the throngs of ripoffs, although it was too delightfully weird to create its own franchise.
See on: YouTube, as they're in the public domain

"2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY" (1968)

"2001: A Space Odyssey" blew audiences' minds with stunning visions of space travel back in 1968. WARNER BROS. PICTURES

Big-budget space movies were pretty thin on the ground in 1970s Hollywood, despite the rise of the space program —and especially considering one of the 1960s' biggest hits: Stanley Kubrick's hypnotic sci-fi/art film. You can see the cash-strapped "Star Wars" production drawing on the pioneering work of "2001"'s crafty f/x artist Douglas Trumbull, who found practical ways to create many of the film's still-stunning images.
See on: Netflix Instant

"CASABLANCA" (1942)

"Casablanca" features a melting-pot bar, just like the cantina from "Star Wars." WARNER BROS. PICTURES

If that multicultural cantina scene looked familiar, that's because Lucas was inspired by Rick's Cafe in "Casablanca," a hive for the world's scum and villains — or at least everyone from Peter Lorre to Claude Rains to Sidney Greenstreet to Humphrey Bogart himself. Better yet: Massive midfilm flashback aside, the bar stuff takes up pretty much the whole movie.
See on: For purchase on iTunes, Google Play and Vudu

"METROPOLIS" (1927)

Fritz Lang's "Metropolis" also features a metal robot, this one on the dark side. KINO

In 1984, no less than synth-music lord Giorgio Moroder restored Fritz Lang's sci-fi saga, reworking it for modern audiences. Moroder lost the intertitles, cut it down to 87 minutes and lathered it in music by the likes of Pat Benatar, Freddy Mercury, Adam Ant and Loverboy. This new "Metropolis" also introduced evil metal robot Maria back into the pop culture landscape — suspiciously looking a lot like Lucas' more benign C-3PO.
See on: Netflix Instant

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‘Once’ actress sings, plays strings on national tour

Erica Spyres, pictured, center right, with Evan Harrington. JOAN MARCUS

If you go

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Kimmelcenter.org

Erica Spyres makes her national debut in the tour of the Tony-winning musical.

NICK DUSSAULT
@MetroBOS
letters@metro.us

Erica Spyres had limited acting experience when she moved to Boston eight years ago from the Ozarks. The 33-year-old actress has since picked up a handful of theatrical awards in her new town, and landed the part of Ex-Girlfriend/Reza in the national tour of “Once,” the Tony Award-winning musical.

We talked to Spyres in Boston before the show comes to the Academy of Music for a quick run next month.

After 16 months on the road, it must be nice to be playing [in Boston].
It’s really pretty cool to see that huge marquee outside of the Shubert [Theatre] and know this is happening. I remember walking through [Boston’s] Theater District and hoping: One day, maybe. But when I got here, I really identified, and still do, more as a musician than an actor. I feel so fortuitous to find something that showcases the things that I do well.

It does seem like there wouldn’t be a lot of opportunities for a violinist-vocalist in the theater.
Right. But the trend toward actor-musicians is happening right now. “Once,” “Company” and the “Sweeney Todd” revival have all done actor-musician shows. Who knows how long it will last? I tell everyone to keep up with whatever instruments you play. You never know when it will be the thing that gets you the job.

You certainly are part of an incredibly talented ensemble.
These people are amazing. Most of them play a bunch of instruments. I play basic trumpet, guitar and piano, but violin and voice are my specialties. It’s inspiring to be with so many talented musicians who make me want to learn more and do more, to stretch beyond my limitations. Every night I watch some of them and think, “Hmm, keep practicing, Erica.”

You seem to be right at home on stage with them.
Having grown up playing and singing folk-like music with family and friends, this show feels really right to me. It’s more like a chamber musical, very ensemble-heavy, so I sometimes feel like I’m just playing and singing with friends.

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What to gift your favorite Philadelphian

Whether you didn't leave enough time for ordering online or you just prefer holding something in your hand before you decide to buy, here are presents you can shop for locally. Just remember, these are for giving — no keepsies. RACHEL VIGODA

Primark

Stuff their stockings with inexpensive goodies from the brand new Primark in the King of Prussia mall, like a scented candle in a shiny jar ($2.50 to $5).

Sermania

Joe Sermania makes jewelry in his shop at 1719 East Passyunk — you can actually watch him firing pieces by hand, like this Philly pride "Love" necklace (silver, $45; gold, $75).

NY Cruets

Stop by the NY Cruets booth at Christmas Village (15th and Arch streets) to pick up a present for your favorite foodie. These sleek, eye-catching bottles are designed to hold oil and vinegar. Expect to spend around $50.

Phan Cave

Your buddy's very best tailgate pales in comparison to what Colleen O'Hara and Jacqueline McDevitt of Phan Cave can put together. Give the sports nut in your life the gift of an elaborate customized tailgating experience. Prices vary by package; get the details at Phancave.com.

611 Lifestyle

Head to 611 in Old City (232 N. Second St.) to outfit the fashionable dude in your life. We're into the Jett wool coat ($299), which stands out with an asymmetrical closure and a shawl collar — plus it's fully lined, so there's substance to go with all that style.

Di Bruno Bros.

Philly's cheese experts know that the best gifts are edible. The only thing you have to do is decide if you want to show up at the holiday party with the Abbondanza, Cheese Lover, Midnight Snacker or Adventurous Eater gift basket. Check out those and more, plus store addresses, at Dibruno.com.

Blokes Barbershop & Gentleman's Emporium

Give the dapper gent — or the too-cool hipster — in your life an Italian-made badger hair shaving brush in a funky barbershop pole design ($65) from Blokes on 151 N. Third St.

Philly Phaithful

It's hard to choose a favorite from Philadelphia Experience, the new Philly-centric clothing line from Philly Phaithful, available in several stores in the Philadelphia area (scope them all at Phillyphaithful.com). The T-shirts are $24.99 and sweatshirts are $41.99.

ALL IMAGES PROVIDED

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Gifts that give back

Feel extra good about what you put under the tree with these presents that generate money to help those in need.

EMILY LAURENCE
@EmLaurence
emily.laurence@metro.us

Even if you've been a little naughty this year, a sure way to end up on Santa's nice list is to give a gift that does double duty by helping someone in need. Whether you're hunting for the perfect present for your best friend, mom, boss or nephew, everything on this list not only makes an awesome gift anyway, but a portion of the proceeds goes to help someone around the world. 'Tis the season.

TOMS Saddle Brown Travel Journal

Part of TOMS's "one for one" philosophy, for every soft leather journal sold, a child in a developing nation will get a new pair of shoes. That alone is sure to spark some inspiring journaling. $30, TOMS.COM

Rebel Lock

A high-quality jewelry line that uses a theme of keys and locks, The Giving Keys is employed by Los Angeles residents who are transitioning out of homelessness. The employees' stories are also shared on the retailer's website as a way to spread hope to others. $109, THE GIVINGKEYS.COM

Brass and Cotton Bracelet

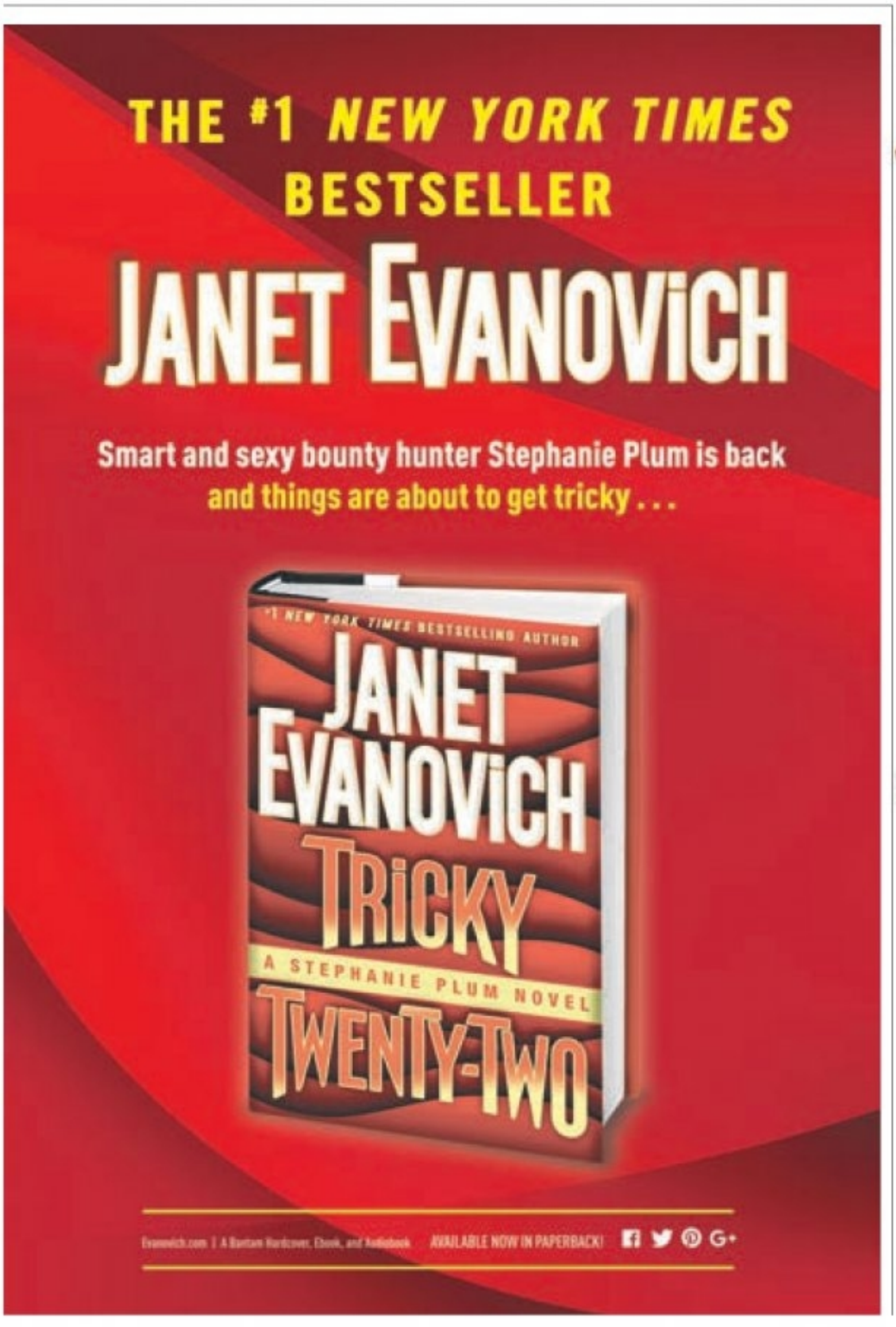
Handmade by Cambodian artisans, The Brave Collection provides above-average wages, health benefits and money for worker's kid's education. This bracelet has the Khmer word for "brave." $38, THEBRAVECOLLECTION.COM

Cheers to that! Brut Sparking Wine

Happily volunteer to bring the wine or champy to the next dinner party knowing that with One Hope Wine, your money will go to one of its various charities, such as supporting the troops or funding cancer research. Every bottle of this sparkling wine sold provides 15 meals to a child in need. $59, ONEHOPEWINE.COM

Minnow Complete Cruiser Skateboard,

Not only will this be one of the coolest boards at the skate park, but it's built to last, made from high-quality recycled goods and durable fishnets from Chile. It's better for the environment than skateboards with plastic parts, and it gives local inhabitants in Chile good, dependable jobs. $149, SHOP.BUREO.CO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Gifts every kid will love

The founders of popular children's brand Appaman tell us what's making it under their tree this year. TINA CHADHA

Designer Harald Husum and his wife and business partner, Lynn, know their way around cool kids' products. After all, the duo's trendy, line of kids' clothing — inspired by the streets of Brooklyn, where they live — can be spotted on celebrity tots (remember that show-stopping faux fur coat North West wore all last season?) and hip locals alike. We hit them up to find out what kids gifts they're loving — and wrapping — this holiday.

Harald

"I'm all about buying my girls cool high tops. Copper Skytops

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by Supra are incredible." (COPPER SKYTOPS, $70, SUPRAFOOTWEAR.COM)

"My youngest daughter has gotten really into learning to skateboard. This board is fun and easy to maneuver, and the color fade is great design — simple yet cool." (PENNY SKATEBOARDS SODA 22", $119, PENNYSKATEBOARDS.COM)

"I'm a big fan of [donating to the global organization empowering children] Right to Play. They have an amazing message, and its grassroots approach is touching the lives of kids in horrible situations." (RIGHTTOPLAY.COM)

RIGHT TO PLAY

Lynn

"The camera has become an obsession of our eldest daughter. I think an Instax would be a fun way to start her photography hobby. The instant gratification never fails to entertain." (FUJI FILM INSTAX MINI 8, $74.99, BESTBUY.COM)

"My youngest daughter started doing 'Girls on the Run' this year. She is really into fitness right now and has been begging for a Fitbit. This Fitbit Zip is a great device for her age group." (FITBIT ZIP, $59.95, FITBIT.COM)

"The Appaman Combo Mod Dress is the perfect holiday dress. It has tasteful bling, if that's a thing. It is also composed of French terry, so it is comfortable and easy to wear." (COMBO MOD DRESS, $55, APPAMAN.COM)

"Our home has officially become a nail salon. When I was introduced to the Ella + Mila nail polish, I was hooked. The packaging is adorable, the colors are fun and it is an amazing nontoxic choice for kids and adults." (ELLA + MILA BONBON GIFT SET , $70, ELLAMILA.COM)

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What fashion insiders are gifting this holiday season

Want to give something personal, useful and chic? We asked five savvy style, beauty and taste gurus to share their shopping lists. RAQUEL LANERI

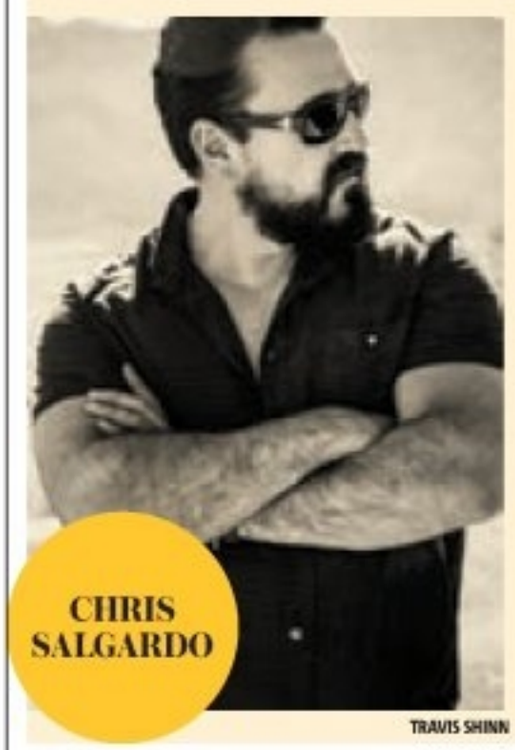
Designer Rebecca Minkoff made her name with the perpetually sold-out Morning After bag. Her cool-girl clothes, accessories and wearables epitomize downtown style.

"One of my favorites gifts to give are Normal earphones. Each set is customized and designed to fit specifically to your ears. They're the most chic and comfortable ones on the market!" (EARPHONES, $199, NRML.COM)

"I'm obsessed with Apotheke candles! They're handmade in Brooklyn and have so many different scents. I love lighting the pine candle during the winter." (PINE CANDLE, $30, APOTHEKECO.COM)

"I always switch up my iPhone cases, so I love gifting them. Case-mate makes such great cases — they're the perfect stocking stuffer." (PHONE CASE, PRICES VARY, CASE-MATE.COM)

REBECCA MINKOFF



CHRIS SALGARDO

TRAVIS SHINN

Chris Salgardo, president of Kiehl's USA, has a new book out: "Manmade: The Essential Skincare & Grooming Reference for Every Man." "I like my gifts to be memorable and meaningful beyond the holiday," he says.

"Being able to symbolically 'adopt' an African elephant or another endangered creature is great, but more importantly, it's a gift of preservation for future generations." (AFRICAN ELEPHANT ADOPTION KIT, $25-$100, GIFTS.WORLDWILDLIFE.ORG)

"I'm dying to see the musical 'Hamilton's' combination of history and hip-hop, and hope to take my closest friends, even if we have to wait months for available tickets." ("HAMILTON" TICKETS, PRICES VARY, HAMILTONBROADWAY.COM)

"I mostly visit them, but I'd like to bring my parents in Florida up for a relaxing vacation at my home in upstate New York." (PLANE TICKET, PRICES VARY)

ALL IMAGES PROVIDED UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE

Deborah Lloyd is president and creative director of Kate Spade New York, which has a new, unsurprisingly adorable book,"Kate Spade New York: All in Good Taste."

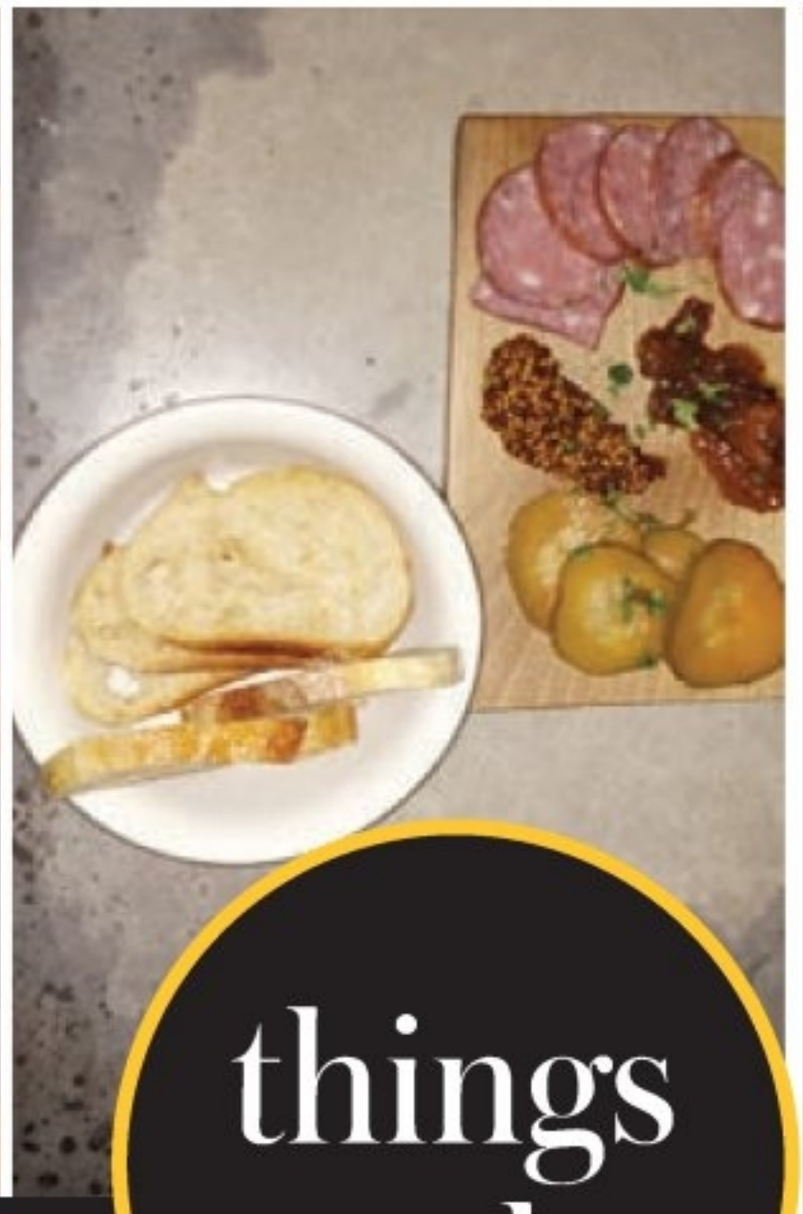
"This holiday I'm loving Rae Feather. I've bought a men's English — I'm British so there is sentimentality in that — cashmere scarf, but I love monograming it too." (MONOGRAM LUXE CASHMERE CONTRAST BORDER SCARF, $450, RAEFEATHER.COM)

"I also love buying a bottle of wine that has a name — like Chloe. It even has a black bow." (CHLOE WINE COLLECTION PROSECCO, $17, CHLOEWINECOLLECTION.COM)

"Everyone needs a chic, personalized spot to put their things — or as I like to call them, curiosities. These monogrammed acrylic trays are perfect." (MARK AND GRAHAM MONOGRAMMED ACRYLIC TRAYS, $55-$65, MARKANDGRAHAM.COM)

DEBORAH LLOYD

Chef Tim Kirkland helms the kitchen at Martha. ALL PHOTOS JOE CARPINO



things to do

WHERE TO EAT, DRINK & PLAY

It took a village

Jon Medlinksky called on his industry friends for the new Martha.

A.D. AMOROSI
@MetroPhilly
letters@metro.us

Jon Medlinsky's many friends in the local bar and restaurant scene stepped in to help him with Martha, an intimate East Kensington restaurant opening today.

"I love this neighborhood and love that everybody's together in getting us running," says Medlinsky of the eatery at York and Martha streets. "It's an area where people make things — artists, fabricators, hard workers in food and design. What we didn't make ourselves, like chairs and tabletops, we celebrate from others in the area."

Medlinsky, a Khyber Pass Pub alum, talks up using "the fruits of this area" for concoctions the Martha team puts its own spin on. The draft cocktails from bartender Phoebe Esmon, for example, combine local spirits like Rowhouse's Demon Rum and Dad's Hat Rye, with house-made tinctures.

From the outside, the boxy corner space seems desolate. There's even a blackboard outside Martha that spells out, "Yes, we're open."

Inside, Martha is a dim, high-ceilinged room with glowing homemade chandeliers made from snare drums, wood furnishings, stacked barrels and a rec-room–like area where a turntable and stereo wait, ready for diners to play albums.

"Jaycee of Philadelphia Record Exchange gave them to us," says Medlinsky. "Music is as important as atmosphere, which Mike Parsell [one of the building's developers] designed and built out handsomely."

The project has been taking shape over the last year in the in-transition neighborhood, across from Rowhouse Spirits and down the block from Philadelphia Brewing Co. and Moosehead Calypso Bar. Medlinsky began thinking of opening his own place while still at Khyber, where he came up with an annual Beer Week event that sourced regional, naturally fermented items. "Pete Merzbacher from Philly Bread brought amazing sourdough muffins, Mike Landers brought his handcrafted pickles — it was cool," Medlinsky says.

Along with Landers, who cooks and bartends at Martha, Medlinsky brought in his Garces Restaurant Group pal, Tim Kirkland, to do a menu that is vegetable-driven, but " there's no morality here — we are serving meat."

Everyone pitches in beyond his or her assigned role — "washing dishes too," Medlinsky says. "I wanted to collaborate with people who can do it all, are passionate about food and beverage, and can make it all happen."

On the menu

The kitchen at Martha is truly open: It has no hood, and cooking is done with electric rather than gas heat. Kirkland's menu is vegetarian-focused, straightforward bar food.

There is meat to be found, like in a duck sausage dish and in the Hammy Sammy, made with country ham from Kensington Quarters and on a roll from Olney's Philly Bread bakery.

Raising the veggie stakes, there's the spicy Caribbean cauliflower with kale and rum raisins; a "vegan jawn" hoagie with eggplant; and a hearty dish of pastrami-spiced smoked beets with sauerkraut.

The menu is heavy on vegetarian options, like the spicy cauliflower.

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Listings

JIMMY HUBBARD

MUSIC

Baronness

Saturday, 9:15 p.m.
Johnny Brenda's
1201 Frankford Ave.
$20, www.johnnybrendas.com
Celebrating the release of their first album since their nearly career-ending car crash in 2011, Georgia band Baroness is back with "Purple," featuring 10 tracks of their signature melodic power rock. Tender, and even atmospheric at times, the mood is contemplative even as the vocals are at-the-ready and unyieldingly raw.

MUSIC

Feliz Navidad

Friday, 5 p.m.
Philadelphia Museum of Art
2600 Ben Franklin Pkwy.
Free with admission, www.philamuseum.org
This week's Art After 5 celebrates the Christmas traditions of Mexico with live mariachi music and a Mexican folkloric band. Musicians Pedro Villaseñor and Ballet Folklórico Yaretzi perform Mexican classics, encouraging dancing and merry-making from the post-work week holiday crowd.

Tuba Christmas

Sunday, noon and 5 p.m.
Kimmel Center
1500 Walnut St.
Free, www.kimmelcenter.org
One of the world's quirkiest holiday traditions continues in Philadelphia on Sunday: Tuba Christmas, an open invitation to tuba, sousaphone and euphonium players to gather together to play holiday favorites. Philly's chapter performs on the Commonwealth Plaza so the holiday horn powwow can be enjoyed by all.

Bobby Zankel

Saturday, 8 p.m.
Philadelphia Art Alliance
251 S. 18th St.
$15, www.philartalliance.com
Philadelphian Bobby Zankel, leader of the jazz outfit the Warriors of Wonderful Sound, teams up for a night of jazz with double bassist William Parker and the Muhammad Ali Quartet to celebrate the 75th birthday of Philadelphia jazz pianist and special guest Dave Burrell.

Foals

Saturday, 8 p.m.
Union Transfer
1024 Spring Garden St.
$25, www.utphilly.com
Supporting their album "What Went Down," released earlier this year, Oxford, England-based band Foals borrows a pop sensibility from the Gallagher bothers while fitting easily into the American slot of arena rock. This nice niche feels fresh, yet appeals to many. Circa Waves opens.

Live at the Fillmore

Sunday, 8 p.m.
The Foundry at The Fillmore
29 E. Allen St.
$15, www.thefillmorephilly.com
This Philly-based Allman Brothers tribute band was founded by lead guitarist Lou Maresca, who was present for the legendary band's last show with Duane Allman at the Fillmore East in 1971, and for their first show without him several weeks later. The seven-piece outfit strives to bring back the magic of that final Fillmore show with every performance.

MOVIES

"Blazing Saddles"

Friday, 7 p.m.
New Liberty Distillery
1431 N. Cadwallader St., $10,
www.newlibertydistillery.com
Celebrating one year of distilling, New Liberty Distillery hosts movie night, complete with espresso drinks from Top Hat Espresso Catering and a free cocktail and bag of popcorn with your ticket. New Liberty is the creator of the local line of Kinsey whiskeys, and seasonal cocktails featuring the blends will be on hand.

PARTY

PAWS Serves 100,000th Animal

Friday, 8:30 p.m.
Barra Rossa,
929 Walnut St.
$20 donation,
www.phillypaws.org
Earlier this month, PAWS rescued its 100,000th animal from the streets, a chihuahua mix named Paco, who is up for adoption. To celebrate this truly amazing milestone, PAWS welcomes the public to its holiday party as a gesture of thanks to the good Samaritans and welcoming adopters who help PAWS in its goal of turning Philly into a no-kill city.
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MUSIC

PROVIDED

Trans-Siberian Orchestra

Saturday, 3 and 8 p.m.
Wells Fargo Center, 3601 S Broad St.
From $32.50, www.wellsfargocenterphilly.com
Gasp! Oh! Merry Christmas! The sounds of the Trans-Siberian Orchestra are not all horn crescendos and chugging percussion beating to the rhythm of the sleigh. This mixture of symphony performance, rock concert and holiday party is sure to inspire exultations of holiday ecstasy from some serious Christmas lovers.

TRAVEL WEEKLY

INSIGHT GUIDES

INSIGHTGUIDES.COM TRAVEL WEEKLY, PHILADELPHIA, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2015

Dream vacation: Barbados

ALL PHOTOS SHUTTERSTOCK

With its white sand beaches, swaying palm trees and laid-back vibe, Barbados could be any other Caribbean island, but its beguiling British charm sets it apart.

A favorite with cruise lines thanks to its location just 62 miles east of St. Vincent and the Windward Islands, Barbados is perfectly located for destination-rich voyages around some of the region's best-loved islands.

Cruise lines mostly visit in winter, when temperatures average 80. Companies, including Carnival Cruise Line, Celebrity Cruises and Norwegian Cruise Line, call for a day of sightseeing, while upscale Seabourn, SeaDream, Star Clippers and Windstar use it as an embark or debark port — ideal for anyone who wants a few days in some of the most luxurious hotels in the West Indies at the start or end of their cruise.

George Washington stayed here

The port is about a 20-minute walk from Bridgetown, the capital, from where you can pick up catamaran cruises and visit the house, now a museum, where George Washington lived for two months in 1751. It was the only time he ever left America.

A statue of Lord Nelson presides over National Heroes Square, or Trafalgar Square as it was called before independence from Britain 50 years ago. Expect festivals, sports competitions and parades to celebrate the anniversary on Nov. 30, 2016.

Although Barbados is small, just 21 miles long and 14 miles wide, there's plenty to occupy a day or two ashore, from lazing on the beach to going underground at Harrison's Cave, a wonderland of stalactites and stalagmites, streams and waterfalls. There are tours and tastings at the Mount Gay Rum distillery, a botanical feast at the 52-acre Flower Forest and round-island Jeep tours that visit the wild east coast, where surfers pit their skills against powerful Atlantic waves. At the Animal Flower Cave, steps lead into a cavern that's home to sea anemones, crabs and interesting rock formations.

INSIGHT GUIDES | JANE ARCHER

Where to stay

Port Ferdinand: This new resort and residential complex is already a sought-after address in Barbados. Luxurious two-, three- and four-bedroom apartments are set around a marina and are perfect for families or couples. If you can't bear to leave, prices start at $2.15 million.

Sandals Barbados: An upmarket all-inclusive for couples only on the south coast, Sandals has beachfront suites with butlers, 11 restaurants and the longest lagoon pool on the island.

The House: This adults-only boutique property on the island's west coast has 34 sumptuous suites and serves champagne breakfasts, offers free water sports and includes one complimentary massage per guest in the price.

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Ring in the new year in the Maine wilderness

Tired of New Year's Eve celebrations that are all confetti, noisemakers, loud bands and booze? Try a nature-themed way to greet 2016.

Say "hostel," and you picture a dorm filled with loud young backpackers. But changing that image in a big way is the goal of Maine Huts and Trails. Calling its properties "boutique hostels," its four lodges in the remote wilderness of western Maine are far removed from the traditional hostel scene.

All the buildings and systems are eco-friendly, with clean energy systems. Each features a large, well-appointed community building with wood stoves, windows providing panoramic views, and decor straight from the photo shoot of a celebrity vacation home.

Creature comforts include hot showers and radiant floor heating. Separate heated bunkhouses provide sleeping space with both the usual communal bedrooms as well as semiprivate rooms suitable for families. Bring a sleeping bag or your own sheets; this is still a hostel, and not everything is provided.

Eco-friendly lodges at Maine Huts share 80 miles of trails for hiking, snowshoeing and skiing.

What is included are breakfast and dinner. While meals at most hostels are pot luck experiments derived from random contents of backpacks, meals at the Maine Huts lodges are planned, prepared and served by staff.

The lodges share 80 miles of trails suitable for hiking, snowshoeing, and Nordic, cross-country and backcountry skiing. About 45 miles of trails are groomed, although not to "resort" quality. The lodges are about 20 miles apart, so the truly fit and inspired can plan a hut-to-hut tour of several days.

Guests on New Year's Eve can welcome 2016 with Champagne. Two lodges — Stratton, near Sugarloaf, with views of the Bigelow Mountain Range, and Flagstaff, which is particularly good for families — plan holiday feasts created with locally sourced ingredients.

Check **Mainehuts.org** for details, plus information on guided overnight snowshoeing trips in January.

INSIGHT GUIDES | FRAN SEVERN

Neuvirth playing like a No. 1 in net

The Flyers know they have a pretty good chance to win regardless of which goalie takes the ice.

ERIC GOLDSTEIN
@EricEsponda
sports@metro.us

Michal Neuvirth has stepped up his play this season. GETTY IMAGES

Make no mistake, Michal Neuvirth is the Flyers backup goalie.

He knows it. His teammate know it. And his coach confirmed it.

However, his status as the No. 2 hasn't prevented him from playing like he's the No. 1.

Neuvirth overcame a shaky first period to make 29 saves as the Flyers beat the Hurricanes, 4-3, in overtime on Tuesday at the Wells Fargo Center. It was the third start in a row for the 27-year-old Czech netminder and fourth-straight game since relieving Steve Mason early in the second period against the Islanders last Tuesday.

The backup improved to 8-4-2 with a league-leading .937 save percentage and 2.06 goals against average, which ranks tied for fifth in the NHL heading into Wednesday's games. His three shutouts are tied for second in the league.

"You know I've said it a bunch of times already," Neuvirth said following Tuesday's game, "the more I play, the more confident I am up there."

Mason, who has struggled with consistency, is 5-8-4 with a 2.93 GAA and .905 save percentage.

The former 2006 second-round draft pick of the Capitals, Neuvirth posted back-to-back shutouts in his first two games with the Flyers but has played his best hockey in the last three-plus games.

He shut down the Islanders over the final two periods and in overtime to allow the Flyers to rally from a 3-1 deficit before falling in a shootout. From there he was phenomenal during a 4-2 win in St. Louis on Thursday and even better the next night in a 3-1 loss against Dallas, which is the highest-scoring team in the NHL.

"He's done a good job. I don't want to understate it or overstate it," said Flyers coach Dave Hakstol, who stated earlier in the week Mason is still his No. 1 goalie. "I thought over the weekend against St. Louis and Dallas games, you could make an argument that he was our best player. Tonight (against the Hurricanes) he kind of fought through a bit of a tough start. But he battled hard when we needed it most, and he had a couple of real good saves, so that gave us a chance to win it in overtime."

Signed to a two-year, $3.25 million contract on July 1, Neuvirth has provided the team with a capable goalie on nights Mason needs a break or is out with an injury. He's already been a major upgrade over Ray Emery, who served as Mason's backup the previous two years.

Flyers announce alumni game

Flyers legends will take the ice in a just-announced official Flyers Alumni Game, scheduled for Friday, Feb. 5, 2016, at 7 p.m., at Santander Arena in Reading. The event will feature Danny Briere, Kimmo Timonen, Bob Clarke, Ray Allison, Bill Clement, Paul Holmgren, Bob Kelly, Brad Marsh, Dave Poulin, Brian Propp, Joe Watson and others.

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Room for some improvement

Chip Kelly thinks there's "another level" for Sam Bradford to reach this season.

EVAN MACY
@evan_macy
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How good can Sam Bradford be?

Well, he's 28 years old and has had two surgically repaired knees.

But he's only thrown one interception in the last four games for the Eagles, and has a better QB rating than Eli Manning in that span. He was the No. 1 overall pick when he was drafted, was the Rookie of the Year and Arizona Cardinals head coach Bruce Arians has nothing but respect for the Eagles' emerging leader.

"As you're learning, you're playing slower," Arians, who has been very high on Bradford since his days at Oklahoma, said. "As you get a feel for it, the game slows down, and your athletic ability can take over, and Sam is blessed with a ton of athletic ability. I had him rated as one of the best ever to come out, and he just got unlucky with injuries. He looks like he's starting to flourish in that offense."

Chip Kelly agrees, even acknowledging that Bradford might be close to stepping his play up to the next level.

"I think there's another level for everybody, so I don't think anybody has ever arrived at this game," Kelly told the media Wednesday. "And I think Sam will be the first to tell you the same thing, that he has gotten better each week. I think he has a better understanding of what's going on. Kind of the game slows down for him. You can see him getting to different things, which puts him in a position where he can now get to the second, third, fourth option on some plays. He's doing a good job with a lot of things. As the season has gone along, we've given him more things to do and he has handled it extremely well. I don't think he's tapped out by any stretch of the imagination.

I think he continues to work at it. He has a great work ethic. He's not a big talker, but he's a big worker and he'll continue to work and get better and that's what we hope, that as we continue to get better as a team, that he'll continue to get better as a player."

In recent weeks, Bradford's comfort and knowledge of his teammates is what has propelled him to play better football. Eagles wideout Jordan Matthews sees the quarterback making better decisions, and ones based on his relationships with his players.

"I've seen his execution fuel his confidence," Matthews, who is nursing a back injury and was limited in Wednesday's practice, said. "He is getting more comfortable with everybody. ... He's getting to know his personnel better he knows his guys. With [tight end Zach] Ertz he is putting those balls high and away to put Ertz in a good position to make plays. He is giving Josh [Huff] room to run. He is really feeding our strengths."

Sam Bradford and the Eagles host the Cardinals this Sunday. GETTY IMAGES

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Bruce Arians and the Cardinals take on the Eagles this Sunday. GETTY IMAGES

Cardinals coach Arians still has soft spot for Philly

The former Temple head coach is excited to return to Philadelphia for the first time as an NFL head coach.

EVAN MACY
@evan_macy
evan.macy@metro.us

No one had to bring up Temple to Bruce Arians Wednesday afternoon, when the Cardinals coach spoke with Eagles beat writers as Arizona's date with Philly in Week 15 approaches.

"How about them Temple Owls, baby," the coach said right off the bat.

Arians was the Owls head coach back in the 1980s and boasts that Arizona is "Temple West." Todd Bowles, the first-year Jets head coach, was the Cardinals defensive coordinator and the Owls have always had a good following in the southwest.

Before Sunday's game was flexed to the prime time slot (in NBC), Arians was planning to practice at Temple.

But Arians' Philly ties run deeper than that.

"I had an interview set up with Chicago, because they turned the paperwork in first," Arians said, referring to the 2013 offseason that saw the coach vying for his first full-time NFL gig. "While I was in Chicago, [the Eagles], Cleveland and San Diego canceled the interviews that we had set up."

Arians went on to say he was disappointed to lost the opportunity to interview in Philly, but of course, Chip Kelly took the job and the rest is history.

Whether the Eagles made a mistake is yet to be determined, but Arians has done a yeoman's job in Arizona, creating a stout defense and providing Carson Palmer and Larry Fitzgerald with impressive second acts.

"That's the one thing Bruce [Arians] does is push the ball down the field. Carson [Palmer] can push the ball down the field and they have some receivers that can get down the field."

CHIP KELLY

Both coaches are still seeking their first playoff wins.

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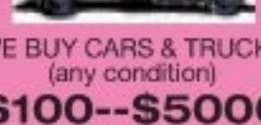

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metro.us/games

ANAGRAM SQUARE

Rearrange the letters in each row to form a word. Write your answers into the blank grid. The first letter from each word, reading down, will spell the mystery word.

1	I	B	D	L	N
2	I	S	A	L	A
3	S	O	A	S	L
4	N	W	K	O	N
5	F	C	R	S	A

1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

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QUIZ QUEST

Nolan Ryan	Lou Gehrig	Ty Cobb
Earl Weaver	HANK AARON (photo clue)	Yogi Berra
Jackie Robinson	Barry Bonds	Carl Yastrzemski
Pete Rose	ALEX RODRIGUEZ (photo clue)	Joe DiMaggio
Mark McGwire	Don Larsen	Stan Musial

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All the answers to the clues are in the boxes, either as a word or picture. Solve all the clues and cross off the boxes. One word will be left over. This is the mystery answer.

Clues:

- In the 1998 Major League season, he hit a then-record 70 home runs
- His hitting streak of 56 consecutive games is an MLB record
- The first MLB player to have his uniform number retired
- He's also known by the moniker 'Charlie Hustle'
- This player's MLB batting average is .366 – still a record
- His statue outside Busch Stadium displays his signature batting stance
- One of the greatest catchers of all time, he passed away Sept. 2015
- He thew a record seven no-hitters during his major league career
- He managed the Baltimore Orioles for 17 years
- Yankees infielder nicknamed 'A-Rod'
- The Dodgers famously started him at first base on April 15, 1947
- He was known for wearing the number 14 jersey during his long tenure with the Braves
- The most MLB career home runs is held by this former Giants hitter
- His entire career was spent with the Boston Red Sox

metro.us/crossword

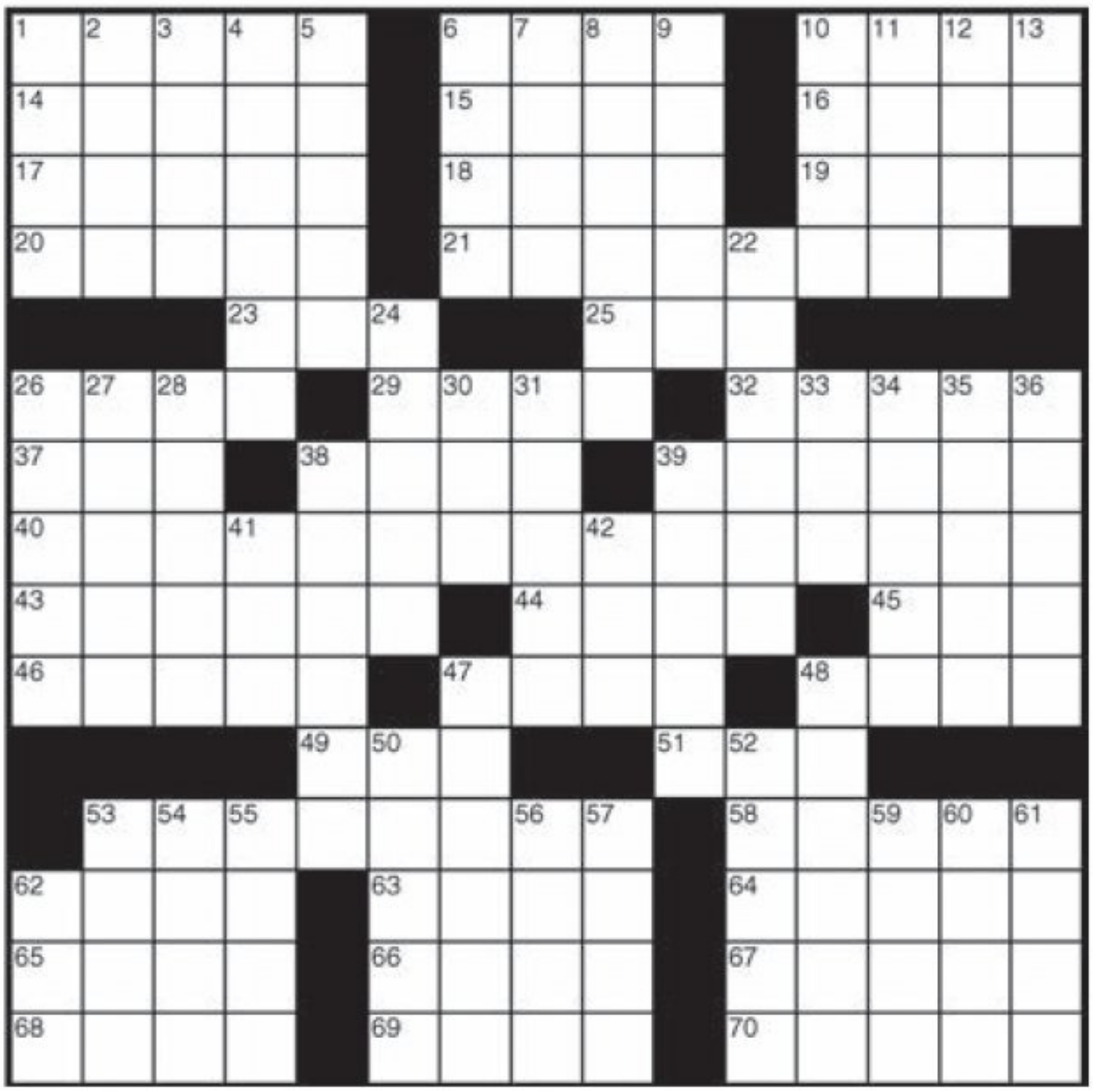
Across

1 Dignity of manner
6 Draw with a laser
10 Oasis feature
14 Again and again
15 Bok —
16 Overpraise
17 Golfer Sam —
18 Cause to split
19 Handel contemporary
20 Upper body
21 Pries open
23 Startled cries
25 Kubrick's computer
26 Memo abbr.
29 Guard animals of ancient Egypt
32 Luau, for one
37 Friend, slangily
38 Brandish
39 Czech capital
40 Our ancestors (hyph.)
43 Most of the planet
44 Piped up
45 After taxes
46 Changed decor
47 Intuit
48 Averages
49 NASA counterpart
51 Sauce in a wok
53 Dagwood specialty
58 Phoenician port
62 Knock— — loop
63 Purina rival
64 Bygone rulers
65 Cousin of PDQ
66 Very, informally
67 Frat-party wear
68 Tree trunk
69 Inventory wd.
70 Blow, as a horse

Down

1 Racetrack start
2 Point — — return
3 Anatomical passage
4 Add herbs
5 Set up a fund
6 Neutral shade
7 After that
8 Seashells
9 Nine-headed monster
10 Come again?
11 Rochester's Jane
12 RN assistants
13 Poe's "Annabel —"
22 Lord Tennyson
24 Duelers' pride
26 More than dislike
27 Cease-fire
28 Slightly tinted
30 Dow Jones fig.
31 Kid
33 Flair for music
34 Booster rocket
35 More certain
36 Dry runs
38 Traveled along
39 Collins and Donahue
41 Mai — (rum drink)
42 — kwon do
47 Conked out
48 Monty —
50 Locusts aplenty
52 Sends packing
53 Fair (hyph.)
54 Shrunken sea
55 Where hackles rise
56 Audit aces
57 Mine, actually
59 Shakespeare heavy
60 Blacken with heat
61 Sec'y
62 Marvy

FOR THE ANSWERS TO TODAY'S PUZZLES, **metro.us/games**



games

metro.us/sudoku

easy

			9		1	8		3
		8			3	4		1
				5				7
		6					8	9
		9	2	3	7	1		
1	7					2		
2				9				
8		1	3			9		
4		5	1		2			

hard

				5				8
8		6	2				4	3
	5		4			1	6	
			5	2		6		
			6		4			
		2		1	3			
	2	5			8		7	
7	1				5	3		6
4				6				

metro.us/horoscopes

Aries Don't divulge secrets or get involved in matters that could jeopardize your chance to advance. Evaluate what you want to change.

Taurus Make plans to do something with friends. Socializing with people who can influence your professional future will be in your best interest.

Gemini Don't feel that you have to accommodate everyone. Do what you can, but don't let your emotional or physical wellness suffer.

Cancer You'll come up with some cost-effective ideas that will improve your surroundings. Plan a trip that will take you down memory lane.

Leo You've got what it takes to get things done. Don't stop or wait for others to catch up. Set your sights on your destination and don't stop.

Virgo You'll be pulled in different directions. Don't give in to peer pressure or get involved with people who have bad habits. Avoid indulgence.

Libra You can chase your dream if you stop waiting for things to come to you. Line up interviews for the new year or update your resume.

Scorpio You'll shine at any event or meeting you take part in, and will impress someone who has more to offer than you realize.

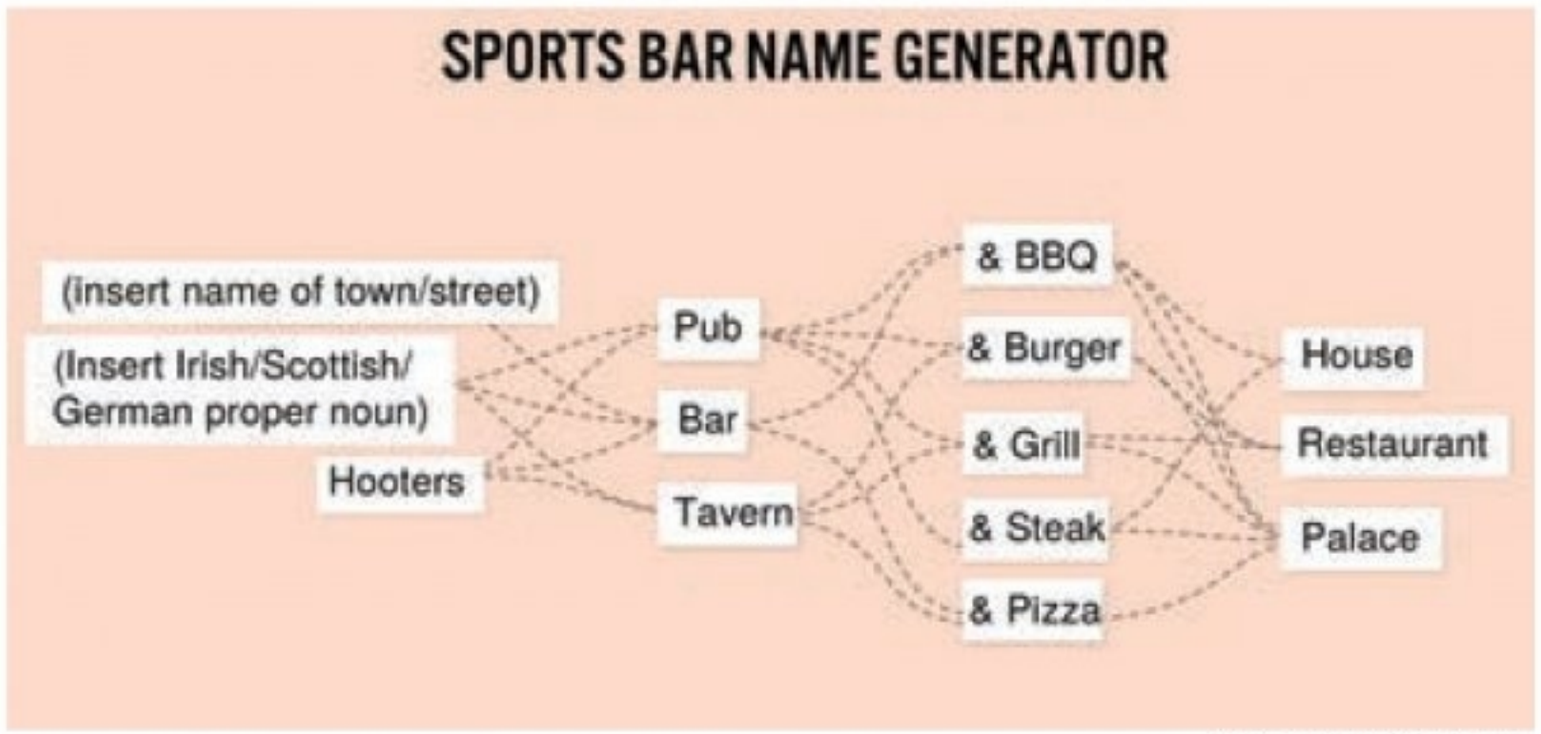
Sagittarius Initiate and welcome change in your personal life. Participate in activities that are adventurous and challenging.

Capricorn Conversations, emails and people you encounter while traveling or doing research will all contribute to your success.

Aquarius Consider what you have been doing and what you want to do with your life. Start to make the changes that bring you happiness.

Pisces Don't give in to emotional manipulation. Overreacting, indulgence and taking on too much will hold you back. EUGENIA LAST

metro.us/truthfacts



BY WULFF & MORGENTHALER

metro.us/quiz

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★ WebID 2194585. Women's prices slightly higher.

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Reg. $30-39.50, after 2pm: 19.99. **Only at Macy's.** Flannel or knit tops. Shown:
★ WebID 968665.

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★ WebID 1916747.

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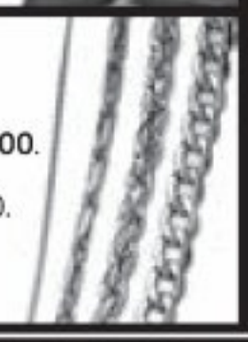
Doorbuster $75-$2,400.
Reg. $250-$8,000, after 2pm: 87.50-$2,800. For example:
★ WebID 539830.



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★ WebID 2383985.

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Reg. $40, after 2pm: 19.99. **Only at Macy's.** By Charter Club. Polyester.
★ WebID 2465005.

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